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Statement submitted by Catholic Health Association of India, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

India carries a tremendous responsibility towards achieving the transformative and universal Sustainable Development Goals with more than one-sixth of the world population and being a strong regional leader in South East Asia.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals towards poverty reduction is uneven. Poverty alleviation programs require further impetus with expanded macro and micro-finance schemes. Hunger targets are on track for achievement and continued support of mid day meal programs in schools and anganwadis for mother and children must imperatively continue. The Public Distribution Scheme is robust and quality must be ensured providing good food for all.

Universal enrolment is lacking and in addition, the quality of education is lacking in certain arenas. Excluded groups belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes must be reached and not only accessibility, the entire ecosystem of a child to enrol and complete education must be strengthened with provision of nutrition, protection from child labor, access to toilets with special focus on the girl child to ensure gender parity. Gender violence remains an issue in both urban and rural areas, gender sensitivity training among law keepers, equivocal representation of women in the police force and emergency help lines are warranted.

While maternal mortality goals are on track, child health targets are off track. There is a major gap to achieve the global target of zero preventable child deaths. Shortages of health personnel need to be filled in and capacity building exercises need to be undertaken with use of electronic tracking systems. Universal health coverage needs to be expanded to reach vulnerable, hard to reach and tribal populations. Sanitation goals are far off track with more than half the population being forced for open defecation and the Swacha Bharat Abhiyaan is a step forward in this regard.

Sustainable energy is a new focus area in the sustainable development goals and with the large energy demands of the populations, alternative means of energy generation including solar energy need to be subsidized and popularized. This will also aid climate change mitigation. Strengthening global and bilateral strategic partnerships for technical and monetary aid is required.

To complete the unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals require work towards ending deprivation in terms of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ill health, strengthening development drivers such as economic growth, industrialization, employment creation and reduction of inequality and use of sustainable technologies with intellectual exchange from developed countries. Good governance is a cross-cutting prerequisite to achieve this and ensure that no one is left behind with continuity in the achievement of goals in the post-2015 era.